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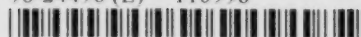
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/53/150.



I. Introduction

1. The present report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 51/4 of 24 October 1996 and outlines the measures taken to implement that resolution.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/4

A. Joint activities

2. The joint United Nations OAS International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) remains the main vehicle of cooperation between the two organizations. The coordination of MICIVIH operations continued to be carried out by the Joint Working Group on MICIVIH, comprised of representatives from the Secretariat of the United Nations (Departments of Political Affairs, Peacekeeping Operations and Administration and Management, and the Office of Legal Affairs) and representatives of the General Secretariat of OAS.

3. The Executive Director of MICIVIH reports directly to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Secretary-General of OAS. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti is responsible for coordinating the work of the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), which replaced the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH) and the earlier United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH) and MICIVIH. MICIVIH's knowledge of local issues, field experience and linguistic skills have been of considerable utility to MIPONUH and its predecessors. Mechanisms have been put in place at all levels of the mission to facilitate coordination and the exchange of information. MICIVIH works closely, in particular, with the civilian police component of MIPONUH on matters pertaining to the detention and treatment of prisoners, as well as other human rights issues, including human rights training of the Haitian National Police. MIPONUH provides administrative and logistic support to MICIVIH, while the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs support both missions from New York.

B. Consultations and exchange of information

4. During the reporting period, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of OAS met on several occasions. The Secretary-General of the United Nations assumed office in January 1997 and visited OAS headquarters shortly thereafter. He was invited to address the Permanent Council of OAS on 18 June 1997. In his statement, he emphasized the important role played by both organizations in Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala in the tasks of institution-building, strengthening of democracy and human rights and building a society ruled by law.

5. On 29 and 30 April 1998, in Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations attended the special meeting commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of OAS and the adoption of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.

6. On 28 and 29 July 1998, the Secretary-General of OAS attended the third meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, which was convened at Headquarters by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to discuss practical and more effective ways of establishing "Cooperation for Conflict Prevention". In his opening address, the Secretary-General stated that "the need for increased cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations had never been greater and that ... [they] have an obligation to enhance [their] cooperation for the prevention of deadly conflicts".

7. The Department of Political Affairs is the focal point for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. In this capacity, the Department coordinates the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/4, including the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly.

8. The Department was also responsible for the substantive organization of the third meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations. The meeting examined the potential for greater interaction and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of conflict prevention within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and the mandates of regional organizations. While recognizing that no single model of cooperation will cover all eventualities, various possible modalities for co-operation were considered on the basis of the existing strengths and capabilities of the organizations.

9. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/5 of 21 October 1994, the Department contacted the heads of all components of the United Nations system requesting them to identify, in their respective offices, officers responsible for OAS affairs to be OAS focal points in various areas of work. Subsequently, the Department established and continues to maintain a list of United Nations focal points, which was communicated to OAS in order to facilitate more pragmatic and cost-effective cooperation between the two systems.

10. The United Nations was represented at a conference on "Governance, Democracy and Civil Society in the Caribbean Community", co-sponsored by OAS, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Inter-American-Development Bank (IDB), and the University of the West Indies, held at Christ Church, Barbados, on 9 and 10 September 1997. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations was also invited to observe the second OAS-CARICOM general meeting, which took place at OAS headquarters, Washington, D.C., on 23 and 24 April 1998.

C. Information received from the United Nations system

11. In response to a request by the Department of Political Affairs, the heads of agencies, programmes, departments and offices of the United Nations system supplied the information summarized below.

I. Secretariat of the United Nations

Office of Internal Oversight Services

12. At the request of the Inspector General of OAS, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (through its resident auditor in Haiti) carried out an audit in 1996 and provided a report on the expenditures incurred by the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), a mission jointly financed by the United Nations and OAS. The audit indicated that the mission exercised effective internal controls over its expenditures.

Department of Public Information

13. During the period under review, a wide range of issues and events concerning cooperation between the United Nations and OAS were covered extensively by the Department's multimedia services, particularly through press releases, radio magazines, daily news bulletins and feature

programmes. The topics included: support of the United Nations for broadening the "excellent working relationship" with OAS, expressed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his statement to the Permanent Council of OAS in June 1997; the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the joint United Nations/OAS Human Rights Mission in Haiti; and a situation report by Mr. C. Granderson of the OAS Electoral Mission in Haiti.

14. The radio programmes covering these and other topics of interest for OAS Member States, such as the preference of Latin Americans for democracy, were produced in the official and non-official languages for regional and worldwide distribution. The office of OAS in Washington, D.C., one of the regular recipients of DPI radio productions, continued to broadcast all programmes produced in Spanish by United Nations Radio in New York.

15. Through the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Department has intensified its effort to collect all the documents and publications issued by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the main United Nations office in the OAS region, as well as materials produced by United Nations information centres and the field offices of UNDP located in Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas. All United Nations materials collected have been indexed in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library documentation database (UNBIS/Horizon).

16. As part of the Department's efforts to enhance the availability of, and access to, electronic sources of information, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been involved in the continuous development of the United Nations web site in the Spanish language, which provides the Spanish speaking population in the OAS region with the opportunity to get up-to-date information on the activities of the United Nations.

17. A Dag Hammarskjöld Library workshop for United Nations depository librarians in the region on the use of United Nations documents is being planned for mid-1999 in Santiago.

18. In its coverage of recent peacekeeping operations, the Department's latest edition of *Basic Facts about the United Nations* draws attention to the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, giving special emphasis to cooperation with OAS in respect to Haiti. Both the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and the *UN Chronicle* covered developments regarding cooperation between the United Nations and OAS, either by including the full texts of General Assembly resolutions on the subject, or in the context of reporting about General Assembly proceedings and deliberations of other legislative bodies.

2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

19. The cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and OAS started in the early 1970s when UNHCR expanded its presence and programmes in the Americas in response to the refugee exodus that took place during that decade in the Southern Cone. However, it reached a peak on the occasion of the launching in Central America of the Esquipulas II agreements, which included the search for durable solutions for the hundreds of thousands of Central American refugees and the displaced as an integral part of the pacification and democratization process in that region.

20. Though joint efforts have been undertaken, mostly at the operational level, in the context of implementation of the respective programmes of both organizations in the field, the outcome of such collaborative efforts are also to be found in a number of important events which constitute landmarks in the managing of refugee situation in the Americas. In this regard, the 1984 Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Panama and Mexico, at which the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees was adopted, the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) and the San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons of 1994 are only a few of the instances upon which both organizations have successfully developed their cooperation.

21. Since 1985, the plight of refugees and other uprooted populations has found a place in the agenda of the OAS General Assembly. Every year since 1985, the countries represented at the OAS General Assembly have called upon member States and the OAS's principal organs to pay special attention to the protection and assistance needs of these categories of particularly destitute people. This year was no exception. The OAS General Assembly, at its twenty-eighth regular session, approved a resolution on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in the Americas, in which the General Assembly, *inter alia*, expressed satisfaction with the cooperation between OAS and UNHCR, and requested the office of the Secretary-General of OAS to "intensify this cooperation in support of efforts made by member States to find solutions for these populations, with particular emphasis on the specific needs of refugee, displaced and returnee women, elderly persons and children".

22. As a follow-up to a meeting between the Secretary-General of OAS and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, held in Washington, D.C., on 30 April 1997, during the 1997 regular session of the OAS General

Assembly, a UNHCR delegation met with the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Matters of OAS to further discuss an agenda on issues of mutual interest. As a result, a number of themes were identified for cooperation between the two organizations which have occupied our joint work plan during the reporting period.

23. In North America, a meeting between UNHCR and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was held in Ottawa, on 20 October 1997, at which the Commission's expert advice was sought on issues pertaining to its competence within the inter-American human rights system in relation to international refugee protection. More recently, the UNHCR office in Mexico invited the OAS representation to that country to join efforts in a human rights dissemination programme being launched in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998. A joint dissemination plan has been prepared with the objective of further promoting both the Universal Declaration as well as the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, which also celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 1998.

24. Under the auspices of OAS, and with the participation of representatives of OAS member States, UNHCR and the International Organization of Migration (IOM), a conference, entitled "Regional responses to forced migration emergencies in Central America and the Caribbean", was held in Washington, D.C., in September 1997. The conference, co-organized by the Open Society Institute and the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, was made possible also thanks to the support provided by the Department of Legal Cooperation and Information and the secretariat for Legal Affairs of OAS.

25. In Nicaragua, until the closing of the office of UNHCR in March 1998, the organization collaborated closely with the International Support and Verification Commission of OAS (CIAV) in its efforts to support the disarmament and integration of members of armed groups in Nicaragua. The successful implementation of the OAS-CIAV programme permitted hundreds of families, who benefited from CIREFCA financed projects, to finally achieve their reintegration in the central and northern regions of Nicaragua in a new peaceful environment.

26. In Guatemala, during 1997, UNHCR contributed, together with OAS and other actors, in the inter-institutional effort to assist the ex-combatants of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) in their demobilization and reintegration. UNHCR focused its activities on a personal documentation programme and provided logistic support for URNG members returning from

outside the country, while OAS was involved chiefly with education and training programmes.

27. Also in Guatemala, UNHCR developed close ties with the OAS programme "PROPAZ", directed at strengthening local capacities in the fields of conflict analysis, management and resolution, as it covers the municipality of Ixcán in Quiché, also a returnee region and, hence, a geographical area in which the programmes of both organizations overlap. Within this framework, in May 1997, OAS-PROPAZ organized a highly appreciated workshop on "third parties in the context of local conflicts" addressed to UNHCR staff. In coordination with the Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), OAS-PROPAZ and UNHCR, Guatemala collaborated in the elaboration of a "map of internal conflicts" in communities of the Ixcán Grande region. Furthermore, a series of workshops on conflict management addressed to local community groups in Ixcán are to be conducted this year, prior to UNHCR's withdrawal from the region by the end of 1998.

28. In South America, the OAS delegation in Venezuela has been invited to participate in the United Nations thematic group on human rights chaired by UNHCR. The purpose of the group is to provide the Government of Venezuela with a coordinated response on human rights issues.

29. In addition to the aforementioned instances of cooperation, UNHCR has, on numerous occasions, expressed its willingness to further strengthen links with OAS, an appeal which was recently reiterated during the last regular session of the OAS General Assembly, held in Caracas from 1 to 3 June 1998. In this regard, the UNHCR bureau for the Americas will continue exploring avenues of collaboration with OAS and its principal organs in areas of mutual interest, *inter alia*, through the joint promotion and dissemination of refugee law and the undertaking of research programmes to further develop regional protection mechanisms for refugees and other uprooted populations within the legal and institutional framework offered by the inter-American human rights system.

3. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

30. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/4, on cooperation between the United Nations and OAS, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has maintained and strengthened its working relations and contacts with OAS.

31. In addition to the growing participation of OAS officials in fora organized by ECLAC, and vice-versa, and general exchanges of information during the period under consideration, joint activities were carried out in the areas of social policies, statistics and regional integration.

32. In the area of social policies, on 1 March 1998, both organizations renewed, for another two years, the joint programme on social policies for Latin America (PROPOSAL), created in 1989 to support the design and implementation of social policies through applied research, training and technical assistance. During the period under consideration, the following activities were carried out through the PROPOSAL programme:

(a) Applied research: The research developed by PROPOSAL has generated important methodological contributions to the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of social programmes and projects. The development of the Cost Impact Analysis (CIA) has allowed for a more rational allocation of resources, reducing the cost per impact unit in basic health and primary education. Several studies aimed at identifying the determining factors of academic success in basic education have been compiled in a book, entitled "Educación, Eficiencia y Equidad", jointly published in June 1998 by ECLAC and OAS. During 1997 and 1998, PROPOSAL has been carrying out a research programme funded by Germany and the five participating countries, i.e., Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile and Paraguay. The goal of the programme is to identify, systematize and propose strategies and policy tools for increasing the efficiency and impact of social programmes. The research has focussed on the "Proyecto Joven", the main component of the Support to Productive Reconversion Programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Argentina; the AIDS programme of the Secretary for Special Projects of the Ministry of Health of Brazil; the Support to Micro-Enterprises Programme of the Fund for Social Investment and Solidarity of Chile; the Community Schools Restaurants of the Secretary for Social Welfare of the Municipality of Medellín, Colombia; and the Social Investment Programme of the Secretary for Social Action of the Presidency of Paraguay.

(b) Training: Courses on formulation, monitoring and evaluation of social programmes and projects for civil servants in charge of formulating social policies, programmes and projects were organized in Buenos Aires in June 1997, in collaboration with the Secretary of Social Development and the Latin American Faculty on Social Sciences, and in Brasilia from 14 to 25 April 1997, in collaboration with the Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada and the Centro de Treinamento para o

Desenvolvimiento Economico e Social. In addition to those courses, two seminars on *ex post facto* evaluation of social projects were organized in Santiago from 24 to 26 September and from 29 to 31 October 1997, in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation.

(c) Technical Assistance: Activities were concluded in 1997 on the evaluation of the nutritional and educative impact of the school lunches programme in Uruguay; the evaluation of the food subprogramme of the solidarity support for the elderly programme in Argentina; and the impact evaluation of the support to micro-enterprises programme of the Fund for Social Investment and Solidarity carried out by the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation of Chile. In addition, it is expected that new technical assistance activities, consisting of the development of a monitoring system for the labour reconversion programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Argentina, will begin in 1998. In addition to this, possible technical assistance activities are under study with the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation of Chile.

33. Within the framework of the Agreement on Technical Cooperation in Statistical Matters between OAS and ECLAC, signed on 7 October 1993, the second Joint Meeting of High-Level Statistical Experts took place at ECLAC headquarters from 15 to 18 October 1996. During the meeting, both organizations presented their programmes of work on statistical matters for the years 1997 and 1998, and delegates from 27 countries reviewed international and regional cooperation programmes and debated issues such as the effects of globalization on statistical systems, innovation and competitiveness, as well as the dissemination of statistical information and training. In addition, the seventeenth meeting of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Statistical Conference, held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on 10 and 11 April 1997, presented a follow-up to the agreements reached at the second Joint Meeting between OAS and ECLAC on statistical matters. ECLAC prepared for the chair of the nineteenth meeting of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Statistical Conference, which took place in Washington, D.C., on 19 and 20 November 1997, a report of the activities from the programme of work presented at the second Joint Meeting between OAS and ECLAC on statistical matters carried out between 1 November 1996 and 31 October 1997. Lastly, ECLAC is currently organizing the third Joint Meeting of High-Level Statistical Experts, scheduled to take place in late October 1998.

34. Together with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and within the framework of the Tripartite Committee OAS-IDB-ECLAC, ECLAC and OAS have continued

assisting Governments in the implementation of the new hemispheric agenda resulting from the Summit of the Americas, held in Miami, Florida, from 9 to 11 December 1994, in particular with regard to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). So far, ECLAC has been particularly active in the working groups dealing with competition, services and access to markets by smaller economies. During 1997 and 1998, it participated in and hosted the third, fourth, fifth and sixth meetings of the Working Group on Services, in March, July and October 1997, and January 1998. It also participated in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth meetings of the Working Group on Competition in January, July and September 1997 and January 1998; and in the sixth, seventh, and eight meetings of the Working Group on Smaller Economies in February, August, and October 1997. ECLAC also participated in the Ministerial Meeting in San José, Costa Rica, in March 1998, which decided to establish the Committee on Trade Negotiations (CTN), and in the first meeting of CTN, in Buenos Aires, in June 1998. This meeting began a new phase centred on the negotiation process of establishing the Free Trade Area. The rules and procedures adopted by CTN include the participation of the Tripartite Committee, supporting the administrative secretariat and providing technical assistance to the different entities of FTAA (CTN, negotiating groups, committees and consultative groups). On this basis, ECLAC is presently assessing the areas in which it could continue to assist – as part of the Tripartite Committee, together with OAS and IDB – the FTAA process according to its competitive edge and resources available. The Plan of Action of the second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago in April 1998, also requested ECLAC and OAS to strengthen regional cooperation in the area of education. Both organizations are already active in the Working Group on follow-up to the commitments on education of the Summit.

4. World Food Programme

35. No official formal cooperation agreement exists between WFP and OAS, but, at the country level, there is informal interchange, including seminars and workshops. Representatives of OAS attend WFP food and coordination meetings, which are chaired by WFP (with CARICOM), and contacts are made through the representatives of member States.

5. United Nations International Drug Control Programme

36. During the biennium 1997–1998, the United Nations and OAS continued their close collaboration in the field of international drug control. Specifically, this work was

carried out by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD).

37. UNDCP and CICAD meet twice yearly to consult on regional drug control strategies, and trends and programming priorities, and to set forth the highest practicable level of coordination in project planning, information-gathering and analysis.

38. Both organizations were associated in regional and subregional programmes, projects and workshops aimed at the harmonization of national drug control legislation, strengthening of essential chemicals and precursors control departments, drug abuse prevention and money laundering. Overall priority is assigned to the capacity-building of national drug control commissions, through technical support at the technical, legal and managerial levels.

39. By way of example, UNDCP and CICAD collaborated in the organization of Caribbean technical task group meetings on subjects such as regional law enforcement and maritime cooperation, held in October 1997, and collaborated in the second Regional Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action on Drug Control, Cooperation and Coordination in the Caribbean, held in December 1997. Both CICAD and UNDCP are in the process of implementing selected recommendations of that Plan of Action on the basis of respective comparative advantages. Further, UNDCP and CICAD are jointly supporting subregional programmes in both the Caribbean and South America aimed at establishing uniform information-gathering and processing systems for the measurement of drug abuse prevalence and incidence. Uniform drug abuse measurement tools are essential for cross-country comparability and the assessment of trends at national and regional levels.

40. UNDCP is currently supporting, at the technical level, the elaboration of a regional multilateral drug control evaluation system, a task entrusted to CICAD by the Summit of the Americas at its April 1998 meeting in Santiago. UNDCP's contribution is focused on the development of standards and criteria for the measurement of effectiveness of national and regional drug control policies and programmes.

41. CICAD and UNDCP routinely exchange information on their operational activities in the field. On the basis of a joint aide-mémoire of 3 August 1995, UNDCP and CICAD conduct joint appraisals of regional and subregional programme and project ideas before they reach the level of implementation, thus ensuring complementarity, optimal division of labour and the avoidance of duplication.

6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

42. At the Summit Conference on Sustainable Development, held at Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in December 1996, OAS was entrusted with coordinating follow-up to the Plan of Action of the Summit Conference. The Plan of Action represents a new commitment on the part of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to carry out specific initiatives through a collective effort by countries and international agencies to promote sustainable development in the region. In October 1997, UNESCO decided to participate in the Plan of Action by providing cooperation in the amount of \$250,000.

43. Within the framework of this joint UNESCO/OAS cooperation, the following projects were agreed as part of the follow-up to the Summit Conference:

(a) A document entitled "Education for a viable future in the Americas" is being prepared, which reflects international thinking on the subject, following the meeting on that theme organized by UNESCO in Thessaloniki, Greece, in December 1997. This document will be considered at a seminar/workshop to be held in Bogotá in 1998.

(b) Both organizations will cooperate in the development of an international network of institutions to train specialized teachers; this will lead to the production of the guides and guidelines needed for the establishment of new training programmes at the national and local levels.

(c) The development of an international register is intended to promote knowledge of and information on innovative practices in the field of sustainable development through the Internet.

(d) A project on "Education for democracy and democratic management" is intended to disseminate democratic practices in the Americas through educational systems at the national and local levels in order to promote sustainability in communities and local schools. The project output will be the publication on innovative experiences in educational management.

44. In the field of science, OAS accepted UNESCO's invitation to participate, either as a co-sponsor or as a partner, in the World Conference on Science, to be held in June 1999.

45. In the area of communication, information and informatics, a workshop in networking technology for Latin America and the Caribbean was scheduled for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 13 to 18 July 1998. UNESCO and OAS are co-promoters of the workshop.

46. From 1986 to 1992, OAS was represented on the Executive Committee of the Regional Programme to Strengthen Cooperation among National Information Networks and Systems for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOLAC). OAS is regularly invited to attend meetings organized by the UNESCO regional offices and these efforts will be continued, allowing OAS staff members to benefit from information and informatics activities in the region.

47. The UNESCO office in El Salvador provided the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women with technical and financial support for a seminar/workshop on the theme "Salvadoran Women and the Culture of Peace", which was held in San Salvador from 22 to 24 January 1996. The objective of the seminar was to integrate Salvadoran women in the establishment of a genuine culture of peace and to promote a clearly defined leading role for women in the consolidation of peace and democracy.

48. An international seminar on "Women in Central America, Panama, Mexico and the Dominican Republic for a Culture of Peace", held in Guatemala City from 21 to 23 August 1997, adopted the outline of a project to be developed by UNESCO and the Inter-American Commission of Women. The objective of the project was promotion of the region's women leaders in their incorporation of and in the development of a culture of peace.

49. Since June 1997, UNESCO and the OAS Office of Cultural Affairs have been strengthening institutional ties in the areas of culture through regular meetings and communications with a view to identifying common areas of interest for developing projects and activities and avoiding any duplication of work. OAS participated in the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, sponsored by UNESCO in late March 1998 in Stockholm. OAS will also participate in the next meeting on culture and development to be organized by UNESCO and IDB in Paris in 1999.

50. During the period under review, it should be noted that OAS has published the papers presented by participants at the UNESCO workshop held at Cuenca, Ecuador, in 1995 on the theme "Illicit trafficking of cultural property in Latin America". UNESCO also financed the publishing of a book entitled "One hundred missing objects: looting in Latin America".

7. International Labour Organization

51. In October 1995, the tenth Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour was held in Buenos Aires as one of the activities of the inter-American labour system of OAS.

At that Conference, the Ministers of Labour adopted a declaration, which included a request that the International Labour Organization (ILO), among other international organizations, should provide such analytical support, technical assistance and relevant reports, within its area of competence, as might be requested by the four Working Groups established by the Conference to study the following issues: modernization of ministries of labour, social dialogue and collective bargaining, the labour force of the future and the impact of economic integration on employment.

52. During the Conference, at which ILO participated as an observer, the Regional Office presented two technical papers: one on the employment situation in the region, "The employment challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean", and the other on labour standards and integration, "The labour dimensions of economic integration in Latin America and the Caribbean".

53. Since then, ILO has participated in all the meetings of the four Working Groups and has responded to the requests of the member countries belonging to each Group. Likewise, it has supported and participated in the meetings and seminars convened by the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labour Matters (CEATAL) and the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE).

54. The members of Working Group 1 on "Economic integration and its effects on employment and labour migrations", meeting in Washington, D.C., in November 1995, adopted the terms of reference for a comparative study of employment policies in the context of hemispheric integration. Under subsequent arrangements between OAS, IDB and ILO, it was agreed that the study would be conducted by ILO and funded jointly by IDB and ILO. Owing to financial constraints, it was agreed that the study would focus exclusively on the analysis of direct employment policies in seven countries. Each of the country reports was to be submitted by the end of 1996 and the comparative study by the end of the first quarter of 1997. ILO has discharged this obligation, having already submitted to IDB, OAS and the respective Ministries of Labour the reports on programmes to improve employment and income in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru. In March 1998, the studies were published jointly by ILO and IDB, along with a comparative analysis of employment and income policies and programmes in the seven countries.

55. In relation to the issue dealt with by Working Group 1, ILO conducted two more studies during 1996-1997: one, on the effects of trade liberalization on employment and wages in Brazil, Chile and Peru, and the other on labour costs and

competitiveness in the manufacturing sector in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. In addition, a study is being completed on the effects of trade liberalization and labour reform on labour productivity. Although these activities were not among those which ILO had projected to carry out for Working Group 1, these studies may be useful for the countries belonging to that Group and, in general, for all the countries of the region, since the selection of the countries in which the studies were conducted has made it possible to draw some conclusions in relation to the effect of liberalization on employment and to differences in the structure of labour costs, recent trends in such costs and their relationship to competitiveness.

56. As a participant in Working Group 2 on "Social dialogue and collective bargaining" which met in Bogotá in October 1996, ILO presented a paper on updating and conceptualizing social dialogue and cooperation in processes of economic liberalization, modernization and globalization. This paper and the document prepared by the Ministry of Labour of Colombia and the OAS General Secretariat were the basic documents for the meeting.

57. Prior to this meeting, COSATE organized a workshop, in Buenos Aires in May 1996, on "Social dialogue and collective bargaining in the Americas". ILO also participated in this workshop and presented a paper on the subject.

58. In April 1996, in Washington, D.C., ILO also participated in Working Group 3 on "Modernization of the Ministries of Labour and information on labour markets" and was requested to prepare a study on the modernization processes being carried out in Ministries of Labour in the region, including policy recommendations and guidelines for action. ILO worked on both a diagnostic study of the development of the Ministries of Labour and an analysis of the new roles of future Ministries in the context of the current reform of labour administration and completed a diagnostic study of all the Ministries of the region, which described their development up to 1992. In response to the Group's request, at the beginning of July 1997, ILO undertook to update the study on the basis of each Ministry's reply to its survey. As of April 1998, replies had been received from Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

59. ILO began to analyse current trends in labour administration and their effects on the roles and functions of future Ministries before the tenth Conference of Ministers was held in Buenos Aires in 1995. In this connection, ILO sought the collaboration of experts both within and outside the region and prepared a document reflecting the main aspects of the issue. This document was submitted for

consideration to the ILO members in the region during a tripartite meeting held in May 1997. The policy guidelines established at that tripartite meeting are being considered by countries in the process of modernizing their labour administration systems and the relevant Ministries.

60. ILO participated in the seminar held by CEATAL in Buenos Aires in April 1996 on "Modernization of the Ministries of Labour and information on labour markets" and made a presentation on the subject matter.

61. The ILO Inter-American Centre for Research and Documentation on Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) prepared one of the basic documents and participated in the organization and conduct of the meeting Working Group 4 on "The labour force of the future: Productive restructuring and vocational training" which met in San José, Costa Rica, in August 1996.

62. In addition, OAS Executive Secretariat for Integral Development and the statistical institutes of the countries of the region are beginning to implement the inter-American labour market information system (SISMEL) project. ILO will take part in the project's design and implementation as a participant in the working group established for this purpose.

63. Lastly, the ILO area office for Central America is supporting various activities of the OAS Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, a regional agency affiliated with OAS.

8. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

64. The collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and OAS has covered a wide spectrum of activities ranging from reciprocal representation at meetings, exchanges of information and experiences, exchanges of documents and publications and the implementation of joint actions.

9. The World Bank

65. The President of the World Bank, Mr. Wolfensohn, has emphasized the importance he places on partnerships with other institutions in enabling the World Bank to use its resources most effectively in assisting our member countries. Given the significance the World Bank accords to its partnership and cooperation with OAS, the President of the Bank meets regularly with the heads of OAS and IDB to discuss matters of common interest and to coordinate activities.

66. Since the first Summit of the Americas, held in Miami in 1994, relations between the World Bank and OAS have intensified. OAS was given a lead role in the organization of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), in which the World Bank participates as an observer. In October 1997, the Bank hosted the tenth meeting of SIRG, demonstrating its commitment to the summit process and to cooperation with OAS.

67. Bank relations with OAS will continue to strengthen and intensify as a result of the second Summit of the Americas, held in April 1998 in Santiago. The Regional Office has assisted in the preparation for the Summit, notably by intensive participation in a working group on education. As a follow-up to the Summit, the Bank was to host a conference on education in the Americas in June 1998. The conference will bring together ministers of education and finance, along with key business leaders, and will highlight the importance of better educational outcomes in the achievement of regional development and poverty reduction goals.

68. An additional focus of cooperation has been the area of sustainable development, in which the two institutions have worked together on both preparation of and follow-up to the Summit Conference on Sustainable Development, held in 1996.

10. United Nations Environment Programme

69. The Summit Conference on Sustainable Development identified the key challenges for the development of the Latin American region in the next five decades and its main urban problems. It also requested the participation and cooperation of development agencies. Subsequently, an Inter-agency Task Force was created under the coordination of OAS to assist in achieving the objectives decided on at the meeting and, to this end, established five Working Groups, respectively on sustainable cities and communities, innovative financing for sustainable development, a hemispheric network of legal experts on the environment, coordination of technical cooperation on water supply and on cleaner production. UNEP heads the Working Group on cleaner production and chaired the "First Meeting of the Cleaner Production Working Group of the Inter-agency Task Force to Support the Bolivia Summit Follow-up", in Washington, D.C., on 20 April 1998. The objectives of the meeting were to identify the current cleaner production activities undertaken in the region by various agencies and to define specific tasks the Working Group will be focusing on to promote the implementation of cleaner production. The Working Group decided to develop a regional programme

on cleaner production in hospitals, to establish an executive committee to identify priority areas to be addressed by the Working Group and to convene the "Cleaner Production Conference of the Americas", which was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in August, 1998.

70. The eleventh Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held in March 1998, in Lima. Subsequently, the Forum of Ministers established an Inter-agency Technical Committee where "UNEP will encourage the participation of both the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and bodies of the inter-American system" in order to facilitate the technical coordination of programmes that these organizations undertake in Latin America and the Caribbean.

71. The 1997 Source Book of Alternative Technologies for Freshwater Augmentation was prepared by the Unit of Sustainable Development and Environment of the General Secretariat of OAS, as part of a joint UNEP Water Branch and International Environmental Technology Centre effort, with the purpose of providing water resource managers and planners with information on used technologies, especially in developing countries and economies in transition.

72. The Inter-American Dialogue on Water Management, held in Miami, Florida, in October 1992, called for the establishment of the Inter-American Water Resources Network (IWRN) – a hemispheric network to improve cooperation among organizations with activities in water resources management in the Americas. OAS was one of the sponsors of the Miami meeting and was also invited to house the technical secretariat of IWRN. UNEP is a member of the Network's Advisory Council and has provided financial support.

73. The management plan for the San Juan River commenced in 1996 and consists of a diagnostic study and environmental zoning and identification of projects. Technicians from OAS and UNEP undertook joint missions and prepared a technical document, which was sent to the Governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua for assessment. OAS and UNEP also financially supported the first phase of this project. In 1998, the proposal for the second phase of the project, prepared by OAS and UNEP, was also submitted to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for approval.

74. At the request of the Governments of Argentina and Bolivia for technical assistance in the elaboration of a strategic action programme (SAP) for the bi-national basin of the Bermejo River, a grant was approved by GEF for the initial phase of the project. The main objective is to promote environmentally sustainable development within the

bi-national basin, taking into account investment plans elaborated by the "Bi-national Commission for the Development of the Upper Bermejo and Grande de Tarija River Basins", in order to reverse environmental degradation of land and water resources of the basin. The action programme is expected to be completed in 1999.

75. In the case of the San Francisco basin, UNEP, in collaboration with OAS, has been providing technical support for the elaboration of a project proposal for a watershed management plan at the request of the Government of Brazil. For the Paraguay River basin, the Governments of Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay also requested UNEP and OAS assistance in the development of the first phase of a sustainable watershed plan. The project proposals were to be completed and submitted to GEF by July 1998.

76. A medium-sized project, to be funded by GEF, for the implementation of a river basin information system to support water resources management (Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay) is currently under discussion.

77. The objective of the regional mesoamerican system of protected areas, buffer zones and biological corridors' programme is to facilitate connections among the regional system of protected areas, as well as a migratory route for species that move through southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. Additionally, the strategic programme intends to create an equilibrium between biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the region. It was developed by the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD). UNDP and UNEP were approved as the implementing agencies for the execution of the programme and OAS was involved in the elaboration of its first proposal.

78. At the Summit Conference on Sustainable Development, Heads of State adopted a declaration expressing their support for the integration of civil society into the design and implementation of sustainable development policies in Latin America and the Caribbean at regional and national levels. OAS prepared and submitted the initial project proposal to GEF for funding through UNEP. A 15-month project, ending in 1999, was afterwards approved by GEF and by OAS, the United States Agency for International Development and UNESCO. "Non-governmental organizations have been integrated into the project through various mechanisms, which include national focal points in OAS member States. The Inter-American Strategy for Public Participation in Environment and Sustainable Development Decision-Making in the Americas has several components, such as an information network,

technical assistance and training, consultative fora to build public-private partnerships, among others.

79. A project proposal, entitled "Environmental Information System for the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) region", was elaborated and submitted to OAS for approval by the Government of Uruguay in 1997, with the support of the OAS office in Uruguay and UNEP, in order to develop and propose alternatives that optimize the use of existing information in the MERCOSUR region (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and systematize the permanent updating of the information. The proposed implementing agencies are OAS and UNEP.

80. OAS invited UNEP to make a presentation on the existing international environmental agreements in August 1998, in Brazil, during the annual inter-American course on international law.

81. A project proposal will be elaborated by UNEP and OAS in the next few weeks, with the objective of creating a data bank on environmental legislation in the Americas as follow-up to an informal agreement initiated between both organizations at the "Workshop on the State of Juridical Information databanks in Mesoamerica", organized by UNEP in Mexico City in November 1997.